

# Cow and buffalo carts are disappearing day by day in Chalanbeel

Chalanbeel is formed by rivers, canals and beels. The historical Chalanbeel of Bangladesh is well-known to the people of the whole country as a storehouse of grain and fish. The 9 Upazilas of Chalanbeel are Tarash, Ullapara, Shahjadpur, Faridpur, Bhangura, Chatmohar, Gurudaspur, Singra and Atrai. From ancient times to the end of the 20th century, the roads of Chalanbeel were unpaved, due to which the cattle and buffalo carts were in great demand, with the evolution of time, most of the roads in this area have been paved with the touch of modernity, as a result of which the cattle and buffalo carts are disappearing day by day. Once upon a time, whenever you went out on the road, you would see rows and rows of cattle and buffalo carts. At that time, there was no other means of transport in this area.

In those days, the only means of transportation and trust for people to travel from one place to another was the two-wheeled bull-buffalo cart. Now, with the mechanical touch of modernity and the digital age, the ancient traditional bull-buffalo cart and the profession of cart driver in rural Bengal have almost disappeared and are under threat, losing ground to engine-powered Lachimon, Karimon, battery-powered big autos, auto rickshaws, motorcycles, and CNG. The value of this slow-moving vehicle has decreased compared to before. The bull-buffalo cart has become obsolete due to its slow speed, and it is almost useless.

Now, bull-buffalo carts are not seen much on the winding roads of Gramganj. Twenty-five years ago, it was unimaginable to hold a wedding ceremony without a bull-buffalo cart.

The popular bull-buffalo cart was the only vehicle for transporting all the crops of the farmer to bring the big wedding guests and the bride and groom. The driver of the cow and buffalo is called a carts diver. The lyrics of the ancient song – Oki carts diver, drive slowly, drive slowly, remove the shade cloth and see the kind father's house – are a heartbreaking song about a newly married daughter leaving her father's house and going to her in-laws' house. Nowadays, such a cow cart is hardly seen anymore, this charming and beautiful traditional cow and buffalo cart of unique Bengal has been lost.

Maybe the speed of the cow and buffalo cart was not high, but while going on the muddy and slippery roads of the rural areas, the sound of the road and the wheels of the cow and buffalo cart and the enchanting songs of the carts diver's voices created a pleasant atmosphere in the area, old people told this reporter. Rabindranath Tagore's Hat Kobita or Sarat Chandra's Devdas, he came to see his Perboti for the last time in this cow cart. Now these vehicles are just fairy tales. Although 1/2 cow-buffalo carts are seen during the Bengali New Year celebration, they have found a place in newspapers and books.

Sometimes one or two cow-buffalo carts are seen in remote areas of rural areas, but they are not seen at all in urban areas. In modern civilization, traditional cow-buffalo carts have disappeared. When children living in cities see cow-buffalo carts, they ask their parents about this car. A cow-buffalo cart is a special vehicle with two wheels. There is a yoke at the front of the car, with two pairs of cows and buffaloes pulling the car together.

In addition, the driver used to sit at the front of this car and drive the car, and the passengers used to sit at the back. The advantage of a cow-buffalo cart is that it does not require any fuel oil and the risk of serious accidents is much lower.

This car does not produce any smoke, does not harm the environment, and does not cause noise pollution. It is an environmentally friendly vehicle. Cow and buffalo dung was used as organic fertilizer and as fuel for all cooking. With the changing times, the popular cow and buffalo carts of the Beel area are disappearing day by day.

In ancient times, families who had cow and buffalo carts were highly valued in the society. In an on-site information search, we spoke to Md. Dulal Hossain, a buffalo driver of Kohit Tetulia village in Tarash upazila. He told this reporter with great concern that due to the introduction of various types of modern engine-powered vehicles in the market and the paving of rural roads and Ghats, the value of our cars has decreased, and there is almost no income. Many people are changing the ancient profession of the ancient men and joining other professions to earn a living. All of us who are associated with this profession are living a subhuman life with great difficulty, which no one can see. He also expressed his strong hope of maintaining this ancient tradition with government patronage.

*Mirza Abdur Rob Bulbul*